

The Spirit

special orientation issue

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Volume III.i

From the Desk of the President

By Maria Correnti
SGA President

Welcome everyone! I hope you all had an awesome and relaxing summer. This school year is going to be a great one! I am in pure shock right now writing to you all as a college senior; it feels like yesterday I was at my own New Student Orientation.

My orientation is one of my greatest memories from my time so far at St. Joseph's. The enthusiasm that I felt on that day was something that I never felt before. In high school I was incredibly shy and uninvolved, but once I came to Orientation that all changed. I remember sitting in my chair as an incoming freshman, listening to the then-SGA president give her speech. I turned to my cousin next to me and told her, "I want to be student government president one day." She thought I was out of my mind, but look what happened just three years later. Anything is possible on Orientation day.

Orientation is a time to meet new people and to take a look at what the college experience holds for you. It is also a time

for you to jump out of your comfort zone. I loved being an Orientation Leader these past three years because, how awesome is it to meet someone new and get them excited about college?! It is so rewarding to hear from a student that because of you being their Orientation Leader, they stepped out of their comfort zones and got involved.

A lot of hard work goes into this day. The core team that put together this Orientation are the most passionate and dedicated group of students in the college, and they all share one goal: to make Orientation amazing. Our Orientation theme this year, "Direct your own future," holds a lot of meaning. The goal in choosing it was to make the incoming class of 2016 feel like movie stars, and to make them feel special and excited about the next four years.

Orientation is your first impression of St. Joseph's College and you can only make a great first impression once, which is why we work hard to make it as special as possible. Welcome, new students, to the St. Joe's family!



Photo Credit: Kayla Johnson

Every month SGA President Maria Correnti brings you the inside scoop on your Student Government, straight from the desk of the President.

How Student Government Works

By Kayla Johnson

St. Joseph's College and the office of Student Life provide students with co-curricular programs and extracurricular activities through the Student Government Association, Campus Activities Board, clubs, organizations and athletics.

The Student Government Association (SGA), Senate, and Campus Activities Board (C.A.B.) offer students educational and recreational programs throughout the year. SGA consists of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Parliamentarian of the college. They represent the "business" aspect of St. Joe's. SGA officials are a voice for the student body and make executive decisions for them.

Senate is a legislative council

under SGA. Additionally, Senate is comprised of the executive board members of the thirty plus clubs and organizations at the college. This consists of the President, Vice-President and the other positions deemed necessary for the club to prosper. Throughout the semester, each club is required to provide an event for their club members, the school and a service project. These events are often given during common hour for everyone to enjoy.

Finally, Campus Activities Board members include Director, On-Campus Event Coordinator, Off-Campus Event Coordinator, Special Programs Coordinator and Publicity Coordinator. Each coordinator provides students with events geared toward their specific position. C.A.B. represents more the "fun" aspect of the college. They offer a variety of events ranging from themed parties to leadership

speakers to comedians. C.A.B. also participates in community service projects and sponsors trips off campus to Broadway shows and sports events. These opportunities are geared towards helping each student live a life characterized by integrity, leadership and community service. They also focus on multiculturalism, fine arts and other means of self-progression in order to create a more holistic individual.

After reading this, you should realize that the individual is you. As a new student at St. Joe's, one way to make your college career a successful one is to get involved. As cliché as it may sound, it is the truth. Being an active member of the St. Joseph's community will make your time here more enjoyable. The student is a key factor in "student" life. Therefore, your participation is crucial in order for this to be a prosperous year.



Photo Credit: Kayla Johnson

The SGA working over the summer in preparation for the fall semester.

SJC: A Welcoming Community

By Nerisa Bethel

There may only be one Chick-fil-a at NYU's campus in New York City, but all over the country, customers recently flooded the restaurant to display their position on gay marriage. There were kiss-ins at the 1,600 Chick-fil-a locations across this nation. The drastic movement came after the restaurant's CEO, Dan Cathy, made some controversial comments about what constitutes a marriage.

At St. Joseph's, there should not be any demonstrations like the ones at Chick-fil-a's across this country because we try our best to create a campus environment that is free of discrimination, intolerance, and harassment. We are respectful of the identities of one another, and do not question who others are in this very bemusing world. There are clubs like Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning and Allies that are always welcoming members interested in fighting for or just learning about the cause. We see time and time again students much younger than us -- in middle, sometimes even elementary school -- taking their own lives because of bullying over issues like sexual discrimination. We will never forget Tyler Clemeti, a Rutgers University freshman, like so many of you, who took his own life after he was videotaped having intercourse with another man. These tragedies can be prevented, and it starts in clubs like LGBTQ and Allies. Don't be afraid to join and discuss real world issues that really matter; it can save lives.

Being a member of a small club in college may not seem profound, but I assure you that the things you will learn and the people you will meet will provide you with lessons for a lifetime. Do not be afraid to get involved, to dive into issues you were once reluctant about, to expose yourself to new ideas and new groups of people. College is not all academics. What good is knowing ten scientific formulas if you never took the chance to have a conversation with someone new and mingle with people who, underneath it all, are just like you? It may sound cliché for me to say that time flies by, but I assure you it does. I have no idea how and when I became a junior.

If this is your first year here at SJC, or even if it is your last, please know that you will always have someone with whom you can speak. We are a family; if you just reach out, the loneliness will disappear. You may not be the most popular student, and you may not know everyone or get along with everyone, but as long as you speak up, you will find a niche where you belong, whether it is LGBTQ & Allies or Students Joined Through Christ or somewhere else altogether; you will find where you belong.

I wish all of you the very, very best in your years to come. Work hard, play hard, and always speak up!



Photo Credit: Robert Jurman

Graziella's on Vanderbilt Avenue offers brick oven pizza and Italian cuisine.

Where to Eat at SJC

By Christa Sullivan

Being a freshman, or new to any school, is tough enough; not knowing where your classes are, walking in late, barely knowing anyone and on top of that you have to balance out a social life with school work. One thing that might be able to make your life just a little bit easier is knowing where to eat and what to order.

Fort Greene has been an up and coming neighborhood for some years now, and because of that St. Joe's students benefit from all the restaurants, cafes, and businesses cropping up. Just two blocks away from school on the corners of Dekalb and Clermont Avenue are two restaurants across the street from each other. The General Greene serves up American food done right. It's a great place to stop by in the morning for a homemade muffin and scone or even an omelet if you have some time before class, enjoyed while seated at the outside café with a quick coffee or espresso. The menu offers great lunch and dinner options too if you're interested in sitting down for a while.

Directly across the street is Black Iris, offering Middle Eastern/Mediterranean cuisine. The prices are really cheap (almost everything on the menu is under \$10) with generous portions and it's perfect if you're tired of monotonous sandwiches for lunch. The food is flavorful and unique, as long as you're willing to be a little adventurous since you may not be used to some of the traditional spices found in this type of food. I recommend the gyro,

merguez, or falafel sandwich and maybe experimenting with a few appetizers such as the hummus, spinach and cheese pies or stuffed grape leaves. As a nice bonus, you can easily take your food to go.

Right around the corner on Vanderbilt Avenue is Graziella's. It's an unassuming Italian restaurant that serves up great pizza if you're willing to go with a few friends and split a large pie, or if you want to order a small personal pie for yourself. It was even featured on the Food Network's "Best Thing I Ever Ate" for its Arugula Parmesan pie, but if you would rather eat your pizza the classic way, they have that as well, and only \$11 for a small.

In case you're in a rush and really can't make it outside the school, head to Evodio's Place in the lower level of the library. Evodio's serves pretty much everything whether you're in the mood for breakfast, lunch, or dinner. For breakfast I always get bacon, egg, and cheese on a roll or bagel, or an omelet or a muffin if they come warm from the oven, and for lunch I'll stick with a wrap, a grilled cheese sandwich, or the mac and cheese (which is extremely good). I've heard the nachos are great, as are the burgers, but I haven't tried either yet, and keep a look-out on the board for specials of the day too.

With all these options, and a lot more I didn't mention, I'm sure you'll find something you like to eat around campus and hopefully that will make these first few weeks of school a little easier.

What is the Honors Program?

By Antoinette Cammarano

Getting a new laptop and a full scholarship may make the honors program seem like fun and games, but the academic aspect of the program is no joke. Moderated by Professor Mirella Landriscina and Dean Richard Greenwald, the honors program provides an experience that is both academically and culturally challenging. While the majority of students in the honors program are admitted going into their freshman year, students can apply throughout their college careers.

Courses designated for honors students only are offered in addition to "honors option" courses in which students can do honors level work in a regular class. Students are required to take two honors-only classes and two honors-option classes in order to complete the program. However, starting in the fall semester, students are eligible to take mini-honors courses. These courses run for eight weeks and are each one credit. As a special treat from the school, if this one credit course causes a student to exceed the 18 credit maximum allowed per student a semester, the fee that is usually charges becomes waived.

In addition to the classes required for the students, the college offers events intended to broaden the students' horizons and perspectives on the world. These academic and cultural events may or may not correlate with a class' work, but offer the student a change to explore a new area he/she may be interested in. Another treat from the honors program is the trip abroad students have the option of attending in their junior year. Partially subsidized by the college, juniors in the honors program spend Spring Break in a European country.

While the program may seem like a lot of work, it is rewarding for all those involved. It enables students to meet others with the same interests as they as they work to expand their knowledge base. Students who complete the honors program receive a special notation on their diploma at graduation, as well. The honors program has many benefits, but it is up to the students to take full grasp of as many of them as possible.

Tradition at the Olympics: A Sign of Progress

By Dalila Tahirovic

Beyond a shadow of doubt, it was extraordinary watching the summer Olympics this year. The amount of talent presented has been inspiring not only for aspiring athletes, but for those of us who are not so athletic as well. Aside from the athletic representation displayed at the Olympics, something far more surreal and undeniably vital has been present: Muslim women competitors wearing the head scarf.

Although some might not understand the significance of such a display (perhaps wondering what can be so important about having Muslim women being forced to wear "that thing" on their head while competing anyway), I find that having women who abide by the religion of Islam and choose to wear the physical hijab (derived from the Arabic root meaning "to cover") has not only been extremely inspirational, but tremendously important.

In fact, it deserves a standing ovation in front of the mainstream feminists who have constantly dehumanized and demeaned our existence as Muslim women by suggesting we're oppressed people. This deserves a standing ovation in front of the hundreds of men who have claimed that the religion of Islam does not tolerate liberated and free women (which is, of course, actually contrary to the teachings of Muhammad). This deserves recognition: Muslim women are participating in wrestling, swimming, shooting, and other physically demanding sports while wearing the physical hijab.

They all serve as my role models (as they should to everyone else) because although Muslim women who choose to wear the physical hijab (because in the religion of Islam, one can never force another to do something they choose not to do) are too often classified as subjugated individuals, that perception is contrary to the truth. The women competitors are both world-class athletes and adherent Muslims, a combination that is certainly inspiring and representative of significant progress of our era.



Photo Credit: S. Susan Wilcox

Members of the Campus Ministry and Outreach Club prepare for a Mardi Gras celebration.

Spirituality at SJC

By Tyrell Paul

In our lives, we need to every once in a while evaluate ourselves to see how we've grown and what improvements have to be made. Other times, we need to give to those who may not be as fortunate as we are because that is part of growing, too. So what spiritual activities does St. Joseph's College have to offer to both help our own personal growth, and allow us to offer assistance to others and the community?

Every year, the Campus Ministry and Outreach office run by Sister Susan Wilcox puts together an event called the "New Student Overnight Retreat." The purpose of this event is for the freshman and transfer students to have the chance to meet new faces and make friends. Most importantly, the goal is for the newcomers to build friendships with the upper class students. The upper class knows what it is like to be a freshman or in some cases a transfer student, so they can help ease the pressure for new SJC students. The overnight retreat usually starts at 7:30 PM and ends at 8:30 the next morning. During that time, the core team members along with Sister Susan play games and have small group discussions. In the group discussion, everyone talks about their past and the changes they want to make. Like any other event on campus, we have free food, snacks, and drinks. Participants are welcome to bring their own favorite goodies. The college wants all its new students to blend in well into the Saint Joseph's family and not be lonely. This does work because students afterwards have reported that during the event they had met their best friends for life.

Another thing that Campus Ministry

normally does each semester is a Fall Retreat and a Spring Retreat. Both events are similar to the New Student overnight retreat; the only difference is that they last for almost 24 hours. Just like the other event, there are small group discussions, games, and friend making. On the retreats, at least three or four students talk about any positive or negative experiences they had growing up. The main purpose of this is for everyone to feel comfortable opening up to others. The retreat is a perfect time for everyone to get in touch with their own emotions and not be afraid to show them to others.

But what are some of the ways St. Joseph's College offers their students the opportunity to help others? Several times a year, groups of students visit soup kitchens and homeless shelters to help cook lunch or dinner. The food that we donate is normally made on campus for safety purposes and Sister Susan or another faculty member drives everything over afterwards. Once the participants get to the place, they begin serving the food and dessert. Preparing the food and transferring everything over is not an easy task. The main thing is that everyone knows the purpose of playing a role in this activity. Sometimes, when people do these kinds of things, they expect something in return. That should not be the case at all. Helping others should not be a burden. We all should be grateful with the fact that we are taking time out of our busy schedule in order to make sure that others can appreciate life and have the same opportunities we have.

(Editor's Note: Catholic Liturgy and Zen Meditation are also offered at the college on a weekly basis.)

Syrian Unrest: No Sign of Cessation

By Nerisa Bethel

"I am no longer willing to represent a regime that has committed such violent and oppressive acts against its own people." You know circumstances are unbearable when a country's diplomat quits. This is what has occurred in Syria, and these are the words of its most senior UK diplomat, Khaled al-Ayoubi (BBC News, UK).

As a diplomat, he feels that continuing in his position would mean he approved of the appalling situation in Syria. Some may argue that al-Ayoubi is surrendering to the violence, but upon deeper reflection, it is clear that he is making an even greater, more profound statement by stepping down. As a foreign office spokesman from BBC describes, his departure is another blow to president Assad's regime. It illustrates the revulsion and despair the regime's actions are provoking amongst Syrians from all walks of life, both inside the country and abroad. al-Ayoubi's decision will allow the world to realize the severity of the calamities in Syria. For when a senior diplomat steps down, it signals the situation is far from resolution. His choice will also be seen by the natives -- the citizens of Syria. They will know that someone understands them, someone recognizes the extent of the distress that they face, and he will not defend a president or a government that allows it to continue.

The 16-month war is obviously not a minor mishap, and now rebels struggle to regain control over Aleppo. They may be struggling, but they are fired up; they are ready to die for their country if necessary. ABC News reported that some men were disappointed that they could not fight the battle against Assad forces. It may have started as a few persistent rebels, but now the rebels need more than persistence to take back control of one of Syria's biggest cities from President Bashar al-Assad's forces. They need artillery; they need gunfire. They need to take drastic action because Mr. al-Ayoubi is not there anymore and former U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan has also quit as international peace envoy for Syria (AM NY). It is a very tragic situation, but the grim truth is that with Muslim jihadists trying to join forces with the president, the violence will only increase and the casualties multiply. Waving peace signs is not effective in a war that has spiraled out of control so quickly.

ROAD TRIP!

A Freshman Global Studies Experience

By Jessica Jacobbe

Freshman year of college can be intimidating. In September of 2011, I did not expect to make close friendships or take strong interest in any of my classes, let alone travel to another country, and yet I did all those things. I always knew that I wanted to travel as part of my studies in college, and I was able to do that in just my first year.

With SJC's Freshman Global Studies Experience, I was able to dip my toes into foreign waters and experience another country's culture. I first learned about the program through the promotion of the Freshman Global Studies Grant. The Office of Global Studies would award four full-time freshmen participating in the program with \$2,500. The course would consist of a trip at the end of the semester to Seville and Granada, which is in the southern part of Spain. The grant required applicants to write an essay on how the course and trip abroad would benefit their academic and career goals.

After weeks of waiting, I became one of the students selected for the grant, which raised my interest in the course even more. The class was titled "Miracles and Massacres: Jews, Christians, and Muslims in Early English and Spanish Literature" taught by both Dr. Maria Montoya and Dr. Susan Nakley. The course was especially unique not only for its subject, but for the way it was taught.

The class was comprised of students from the Brooklyn and Patchogue campus, and for each meeting both campuses were connected through a live camera. The class would meet face-to-face only five times that semester, but work was required each week by submitting assignments through Blackboard. Dr. Montoya says, "Teaching this class was a great learning experience, as it brought together medieval Christian, Islamic, and Jewish culture through the education technology of the 21st century." Throughout the semester, we studied each religion's impact on the litera-



Photo Credit: Jessica Jacobbe

SJC students go abroad! For, you know, educational purposes.

ture, architecture, and culture of Seville, Cordoba, and Granada. Of course, watching videos about the world's third largest cathedral did not compare to walking the 500 year old brick floors of that cathedral in Seville. Reading medieval literature about the expulsion of the Jews in southern Spain did not elicit the same emotions as standing in the isolated alleyways of the Jewish quarters.

The trip to Spain completely reflected everything that was learned and studied throughout the semester.

The first five days were spent in Seville, where we had tours of the town, Seville Cathedral, and the Alcázar (also known as the Palace of King Peter). For the remainder of our time abroad, we stayed in Granada (which also included tours of the city) and the Alhambra, a magnificent and historical palace. "Class time" was spent for a few hours in the daytime during our tours, which gave us the freedom to explore the cities on our own for the rest of the day.

We became the students of this for-

eign country. We wanted to learn its culture and by the time the trip was over, we were already accustomed to Spain's relaxed way of life. To learn the streets of Seville, we got lost for hours. To experience the city's environment, we ate its food. To know what the country was feeling, we talked to its people, sometimes getting lost in translation.

SJC's Freshman Global Studies Experience allowed me to learn more about the course subject, and also expanded my love for traveling and

experiencing other cultures. Dr. Montoya adds that, "The hands-on experience in southern Spain encouraged [students] to develop their cross-cultural skills and further their interest in global affairs." According to Ken Kuveke, the Assistant Coordinator of Global Studies, there are plans to offer this program to freshmen again. In my freshman year, I was able to learn so much about others and myself, far more than I expected, and this is partly due to this Global Studies Experience.

Give a Damn, Won't You?

By Robert Jurman

To all the new freshmen who have decided to come to St. Joseph's College, welcome! I congratulate you on your decision to become a Bear! You are certainly in for some of the best years of your lives here at St. Joe's, and this college will become part of you as the years go on. I should know; it certainly has left a mark on me (and I on it) during my time here so far and I'm happy that I still have two years left.

Right now I am a junior, but I started to get involved in the college and take stances on important and (sometimes) touchy issues around campus ever since the first day I walked in as a freshman, at an orientation not unlike the one you are at right now. Perhaps you are in the pop-up tent on the mall listening to a speech bored out of your skull, or perhaps you are in a classroom meeting a professor or

"You can't just go home at 12:30, you can't just go to events for free food, and you can't vote in SGA elections for the wrong reasons."

some students (most likely texting your time away waiting 'til you can leave) and you are most definitely experiencing the first of many servings of free food that will be presented at numerous events around campus during your four years here. (We have so much free food around that I think we have house-elves cooking it up. You'll find out.)

But before your mind starts thinking about the hot date you have tonight, or before your eyes start wandering at the girl/guy at

the end of your row or across from you in the room, or before you text another word, remember to give this college a few hours of your time today, because this will be your home for four years, and for the rest of your life you will identify yourself as a Bear. So in these four years give this college your best and it will treat you well.

There are those of you might not care, who might be in the '12:30 Club' and go home just when common hour has started. There are those of you who will never join a club or only go to events for the free food. There are those of you who will never know what the SGA is or care about school elections, and vote for your friends or the popular pick just to say you voted. There are those of you who will not take this college seriously or take the ones who care for this college seriously. There are those of you who might have just stopped reading this article.



Photo Credit: Robert Napolitano

Robert Jurman: He'll melt your face off.

However, I submit to you this: you must care about this college. You can't just go home at 12:30, you can't just go to events for free food, and you can't vote in SGA elections for the wrong reasons. Remember, in college we are all adults, and we can make a difference here. This isn't high school anymore where things have to be the way the principal says. The SGA is willing to listen, and because of hard work that I put in last year with the last SGA and the President, the Administration is

willing to listen as well, and around here there are many ways to get involved. If you like theater, you can join Chapel Players. If you like to write, you can join The Spirit. If you like community service, join Campus Ministry. Or you could be like me and run for class representative or eventually SGA President and make a positive impact on the school community.

So let me be one of the first to welcome you home to St. Joseph's College. This is your time, so go out, get involved, and take it.